OUR SERIAL

THE ANSWER.

We miss her so, we grieve day after day
That she is gone—and since she went away
The world seems empty. E'en the flowers of spring
Seem no more bright. The song birds, when they sing,
Make not such music now as once they made
Before into the Unknown Land she strayed
Can it be true that she is happy now,
While sorrows sore our burdened spirits bow?
Yes, she, in that fair land where no tears start,
Knows, not as we who only know in part,
Sees, not as we see with tear-blinded eyes—
She understands now all life's mysteries;
God's dealings now by her are understood,
She sees how all things work to us for good—
E'en things which we call sorrow, pain and loss;
She sees the crown eternal, not the cross.
She knows that all God's ways to us are love,
And she is happy in that home above.
A few brief years of separation, then,
Never to parted be, we'll meet again!
—Miss Margaret H. Barnett, in N. Y. Observer.

THE GRAFTERS

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER VII.—CONTINUED.

"We needn't keep these sleepy young persons out of bed any longer," he announced briefly; and the coadjutor said good-night and joined him at once.

"What luck?" was David Kent's anxious query when they were free of the house and had turned their faces townward.

"Just as much as we might have expected. Mrs. Hepzibah refuses point-blank to sell her stock—won't talk about it. 'The idea of parting with it now, when it is actually worth more than when we bought it!'" he quoted, mimicking the thin-lipped, acidulous protest. "Later in an evil minute, I tried to drag you in, and she let you have it square on the point of the jaw—intimated that it was a deal in which some of you inside people needed her block of stock to make you whole. She did, by Jove!"

Kent's laugh was mirthless.

"I was never down in her good books," he said, by way of accounting for the accusation.

If Ormsby thought he knew the reason why, he was magnanimous enough to steer clear of that shoal.

"It's a mess," he growled. "I don't fancy you had any better luck with Elinor."

"She seemed not to care much about it either way. She said her mother would have the casting vote."

"I know. What I don't know is, what remains to be done."

"More waiting," said Kent, definitively. "The fight is fairly on now—as between the Bucks crowd and the corporations, I mean—but there will probably be ups and downs enough to scare Mrs. Brentwood into letting go. We must be ready to strike when the iron is hot; that's all."

The New Yorker tramped a full square in thoughtful silence before he said: "Candidly, Kent, Mrs. Hepzibah's little stake in the Western Pacific isn't altogether a matter of life and death to me, don't you know? If it comes to the worst, I can have my broker play the part of the god in the car. Happily, or unhappily, whichever way you like to put it, I shan't miss what he may have to put up to make good on her 3,000 shares."

David Kent stopped short and wheeled suddenly upon his companion.

"Ormsby, that's a thing I've been afraid of, all along; and it's one thing you must never do."

"Why not?" demanded the straightforward Ormsby.

Kent knew he was skating on the thinnest of ice, but his love for Elinor made him fearless of consequences.

"If you don't know without being told, it proves that your money has spoiled you to that extent. It is because you have no right to entrap Miss Brentwood into an obligation that would make her your debtor for the very food she eats and the clothes she wears. You will say she never need know: be very sure she will find out, one way or another; and she would never forgive you."

"Um," said Ormsby, turning visibly grim. "You are frank enough—to draw it mildly. Another man in my place might suggest that it isn't Mr. David Kent's affair."

Kent turned about and caught step again.

"I've said my say—all of it," he rejoined stolidly. "We've been decently modern up to now, and we won't go back to the elemental things so late in the day. All the same, you'll not take it amiss if I say that I know Miss Brentwood better than you do."

Ormsby did not say whether he would or would not, and the talk went aside to less summary ways and means preservative of the Brentwood fortunes. But at the archway of the Camelot club, where Kent paused, Ormsby went back to the debatable ground in an outspoken word.

"I know pretty well now what there is between us, Kent, and we mustn't quarrel if we can help it," he said "If you complain that I didn't give you a fair show, I'll retort that I didn't dare to. Are you satisfied?"

"No," said David Kent; and with that they separated.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HAYMAKERS.

By the terms of its dating clause the new trust and corporation law became effective at once, "the public welfare requiring it"; and though there was an immediate sympathetic decline in the securities involved, there was no panic, financial or industrial, to mark the change from the old to the new.

Contrary to the expectations of the alarmists and the lawyers, and somewhat to the disappointment of the latter, the vested interests showed no disposition to test the constitutionality of the act in the courts. So far indeed, from making difficulties, the various alien corporations affected by the new law wheeled promptly into line in compliance with its provisions, vieing with one another in proving, or seeming to prove, the time-worn aphorism that capital can never afford to be otherwise than strictly law-abiding.

In the reorganization of the Western Pacific, David Kent developed at once and heartily into that rare and much-sought-for quantity, a man for an emergency. Loring, also, was a busy man in this transition period, yet he found time to keep an appreciative eye on Kent, and, true to his implied promise, pushed him vigorously for the first place in the legal department of the localized company. Since the resident manager stood high in the Boston counsels of the company, the pushing was not without results; and while David Kent was still up to his eyes in the work of flogging the affairs of the newly named Trans-Western into conformity with the law, his appointment came from the advisory board.

So it befell that while the newly appointed general counsel of the reorganized Western Pacific was bolting his meals and clipping the nights at both ends in a strenuous endeavor to clear the decks for a possible battle-royal at the capital, events of a minatory nature were shaping themselves elsewhere.

"FOR GOD'S SAKE, BUCKS! SPARE ME THAT."

To bring these events down to their focusing point in the period of transition, it is needful to go back a little: to a term of the circuit court held in the third year of Gaston the prosperous.

Who Mrs. Melissa Varnum was; how she came to be traveling from Midland City to the end of the track on a scalper's ticket; and in what manner she was given her choice of paying fare to the conductor or leaving the train at Gaston—these are details with which we need not concern ourselves. Suffice it to say that Kent, then local attorney for the company, mastered them; and when Mrs. Varnum, through Hawk, her counsel, sued for $5,000 damages, he was able to get a continuance, knowing from long experience that the jury would certainly find for the plaintiff if the case were then allowed to go to trial.

And at the succeeding term of court, which was the one that adjourned on the day of Kent's transfer to the capital, two of the company's best witnesses had disappeared; and the one bit of company business Kent had been successful in doing that day was to postpone for a second time the coming trial of the Varnum case.

It was while Kent's head was deepest in the flood of reorganization that a letter came from one Blashfield Hunnicott, his successor in the local attorneyship at Gaston, asking for instructions in the Varnum matter. Judge MacFarlane's court would convene in a week. Was Hunnicott to let the case come to trial? Or should he—the witnesses still being unproducible—move for a further continuance?

Kent took his head out of the cross-seas long enough to answer. By all means was Hunnicott to obtain another continuance, if possible. And if, before the case were called, there should be any new developments, he was to wire at once to the general office, and further instructions would issue.

It was about this time, or, to be strictly accurate, on the day preceding the convening of Judge MacFarlane's court in Gaston, that Governor Bucks took a short vacation—his first since the adjournment of the assembly.

Late that same night, Stephen Hawk was keeping a rather discomforting vigil with a visitor in the best suite of rooms the Mid-Continent Hotel in Gaston afforded. The guest of honor was a brother lawyer—though he might have refused to acknowledge the relationship with the ex-district attorney—a keen-eyed, business-like gentleman, whose name as an organizer of vast capitalistic ventures had traveled far, and whose present attitude was one of undisguised and angry contempt for Gaston and all things Gastonian.

"How much longer have we to wait?" he demanded impatiently, when the hands of his watch pointed to the quarter-hour after ten. "You've made me travel two thousand miles to see this thing through: why didn't you make sure of having your man here?"

Hawk wriggled uneasily in his chair. He was used to being bullied, not only by the good and great, but by the little and evil as well. Yet there was a rasp to the great man's impatience that irritated him.

"I've been trying to tell you all evening that I'm only the hired man in this business, Mr. Falkland. I can't compel the attendance of the other parties."

"Well, it's damned badly managed, as far as we've gone," was the ungracious comment. "You say the judge refuses to confer with me?"

"Ab-so-lutely."

"And the train—the last train the other man can come on; is that in yet?"

Hawk consulted his watch.

"A good half-hour ago."

"You had your clerk at the station to meet it?"

"I did."

"And he hasn't reported?"

"Not yet."

Falkland took a cigar from his case, bit the end of it like a man with a grudge to satisfy, and began again.

"There is a very unbusinesslike mystery about all this, Mr. Hawk, and I may as well tell you shortly that my time is too valuable to make me tolerant of half-confidences. Get to the bottom of it. Has your man weakened?"

"No; he is not of the weakening kind. And, besides, the scheme is his own from start to finish, as you know."

"Well, what is the matter, then?"

Hawk rose.

"If you will be patient a little while longer, I'll go to the wire and try to find out. I am as much in the dark as you are."

This last was not strictly true. Hawk had a telegram in his pocket which was causing him more uneasiness than all the rasping criticisms of the New York attorney, and he was re-reading it by the light of the corridor bracket when a young man sprang from the ascending elevator and hurried to the door of the parlor suite. Hawk collared his Mercury before he could rap on the door.

"Well?" he queried sharply.

"It's just as you suspected—what Mr. Hendricks' telegram hinted at. I met him at the station and couldn't do a thing with him."

"Where has he gone?"

"To the same old place."

"You followed him?"

"Sure. That is what kept me so long."

Hawk hung upon his decision for the barest fraction of a second. Then he gave his orders concisely.

"Hunt up Doctor Macquoid and get him out to the club-house as quick as you can. Tell him to bring his hypodermic. I'll be there with all the help he'll need." And when the young man was gone Hawk smote the air with a clenched fist and called down the Black Curse of Shielygh, or its modern equivalent, on all the fates subversive of well-laid plans.

A quarter of an hour later, on the upper floor of the club-house at the Gentlemen's Driving park, four men burst in upon a fifth, a huge figure, crouching in a corner like a wild beast at bay. A bottle and a tumbler stood on the table under the hanging lamp; and with the crash of breaking glass which followed the mad-bull rush of the giant, the reek of French brandy filled the room.

"Hold him still, if you can, and pull up that sleeve." It was Macquoid who spoke, and the three apparitors, breathing hard, sat upon the prostrate man and bared his arm for the physician. When the apomorphia began to do its work there was a struggle of another sort, out of which emerged a pallid and somewhat stricken reincarnation of the governor.

"Falkland is waiting at the hotel, and he and MacFarlane can't get together," said Hawk, tersely, when the patient was fit to listen. "Otherwise we shouldn't have disturbed you. It's all day with the scheme if you can't show up."

The governor groaned and passed his hand over his eyes.

"Get me into my clothes—Johnson has the grip—and give me all the time you can," was the sullen rejoinder; and in due course the Honorable Jasper G. Bucks, clothed upon and in his right mind, was enabled to keep his appointment with the New York attorney at the Mid-Continent hotel.

But first came the whipping-in of MacFarlane. Bucks went alone to the judge's room on the floor above the parlor suite. It was now near midnight, but MacFarlane had not gone to bed. He was a spare man, with thin hair graying rapidly at the temples and a care-worn face; the face of a man whose tasks or responsibilities, or both, have overmatched him. He was walking the floor with his head down and his hands—thin, nerveless hands they were—tightly locked behind him, when the governor entered.

For a large man the Honorable Jasper was usually able to handle his weight admirably; but now he clung to the door-knob until he could launch himself at a chair and be sure of hitting it.

"What's this Hawk's telling me about you, MacFarlane?" he demanded, frowning portentously.

"I don't know what he has told you. But it is too flagrant, Bucks; I can't do it, and that's all there is about it." The protest was feebly fierce, and there was the snarl of a baited animal in the tone.

"It's too late to make difficulties now," was the harsh reply. "You've got to do it."

"I tell you I cannot, and I will not!"

"A late attack of conscience, eh?" sneered the governor, who was sobering rapidly now. "Let me ask a question or two. How much was that security debt your son-in-law let you in for?"

"It was $10,000. It is an honest debt, and I shall pay it."

"But not out of the salary of a circuit judge," Bucks interposed. "Nor yet out of the fees you make your clerks divide with you. And that isn't all. Have you forgotten the gerrymander business? How would you like to see the true inwardness of that in the newspapers?"

The judge shrank as if the huge gesturing hand had struck him.

"You wouldn't dare," he began. "You were in that, too, deeper than—"

Again the governor interrupted him.

"Cut it out," he commanded. "I can reward, and I can punish. You are not going to do anything technically illegal; but, by the gods, you are going to walk the line laid down for you. If you don't, I shall give the documents in the gerrymander affair to the papers the day after you fail. Now we'll go and see Falkland."

MacFarlane made one last protest.

"For God's sake, Bucks! spare me that. It is nothing less than the foulest collusion between the judge, the counsel for the plaintiff—and the devil!"

"Cut that out, too, and come along," said the governor, brutally; and by the steadying help of the chair, the door-post and the wall of the corridor, he led the way to the parlor suite on the floor below.

The conference in Falkland's rooms was chiefly a monologue with the sharp-spoken New York lawyer in the speaking part. When it was concluded the judge took his leave abruptly, pleading the lateness of the hour and his duties for the morrow. When he was gone the New Yorker began again.

"You won't want to be known in this, I take it," he said, nodding at the governor. "Mr. Hawk here will answer well enough for the legal part, but how about the business end of it? Have you got a man you can trust?"

The governor's yellow eyebrows met in a meaning scowl.

[To Be Continued.]

SOMETHING JUST AS GOOD.

Couldn't Get Sweet Peach, but Did Not Return Empty-Handed.

"Ignorance is bliss," but one of the bell-boy's connected with a certain hotel in town is inclined to doubt the old maxim, says the Albany Journal. The boy in question is now endeavoring to learn the names of all the flowers that grow, because of an absurd mistake which he made a short time ago. It seems that a gentleman and his wife, who is very fond of flowers, and particularly sweet peas, put up at the hotel the other night. She asked her husband to send and get her a bunch of sweet peas, so he rang for a boy, and when the youngster appeared the man handed him a bill and told him to bring up some sweet peas. The boy looked at the man in doubt and amazement for a moment, but took the bill and left the room rather reluctantly. It was some time before he returned: in fact, the young couple became tired of waiting for him. At last he did come, however, but with a bundle in his arms done up brown paper. The poor boy was all out of breath and as he laid the package on the table he exclaimed:

"I couldn't get any sweet peas in the store, but I brought you some sweet corn, which I thought would do."

Presence of Mind.

On one occasion a great public dinner was given to Isaac Hull by the town of Boston and he was asked to sit for his picture to Gilbert Stuart, the celebrated artist, who was a great braggart. When Hull visited his studio Stuart took great delight in entertaining him with anecdotes of his English success, stories of the marquis of this and the baroness of that, which showed how elegant was the society to which he had been accustomed. Unfortunately, in the midst of this grandeur, Mrs. Stuart, who did not know that there was a sitter, came in with apron on and her head tied up with some handkerchiefs, from the kitchen, and cried out: "Do you mean to have that leg of mutton boiled or roasted?" To which Stuart replied, with great presence of mind, "ask your mistress."—Chicago Chronicle.

Promissory Notes.

It is said that a man whose musical talent was as widely known as his impecunious condition once accosted a friend on the street, drew him into a doorway, and requested a loan of $25.

"When do you think you'll be able to repay it?" asked the friend, to whom it was by no means a new experience.

"This time," said the ready borrower, with an engaging smile, "I hoped you'd be willing to make it a 'Kathleen Mavourneen' loan."

"A what?" demanded the practical man.

"A 'Kathleen Mavourneen' loan," said his expensive friend. "'It may be for years, and it may be forever.'"—Youth's Companion.

Bagged at Last.

Not even the best friends of Mrs. Cobb could claim for her the gift of gracious speech, although they laid great stress on her kind intentions at all times. "Well, well," said the good lady, breathlessly, as she grasped an acquaintance by the arm coming out of a crowded concert hall, "here I've been on a wild-goose chase all day long, and at last find you where I should never have thought of looking!"—Youth's Companion.